

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4 February 2015

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number: S/2534/14/FL

Parish(es): Castle Camps

Proposal: Erection of replacement two storey dwelling

Site address: High banks House, Camp End, Castle Camps

Applicant(s): Mr Graham Forbes

Recommendation: Refusal

Key material considerations: Impact on Countryside and Visual Amenity

Committee Site Visit: Yes

Departure Application: No

Presenting Officer: Dan Smith

Application brought to Committee because: Local Member Request

Date by which decision due: 21 January 2015

Executive Summary

1. The application seeks permission for the erection of a replacement dwelling. Several applications have been made for the replacement of the existing dwelling, the latest being allowed at appeal in 2012. That scheme remains extant until February 2017. The current proposal has the same frontage design as the previously approved scheme but has a significantly larger rear element. Previous schemes have been refused based on the impact of the scale of the dwelling on the countryside and the Inspector in giving permission for the extant scheme removed permitted development rights as he felt that further extension would harm the countryside. In 2008, the applicants were previously advised by a Council Planning Officer that were a smaller replacement dwelling to be permitted and built, policy would allow for extensions to the dwelling of up to 50% of the approved house where they would be in scale and character with the existing dwelling and would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on the countryside. In more recent pre-application discussions with the applicant, officers expressed the view that notwithstanding any other concerns in respect of the proposed scheme, the Inspector's view on further extensions would outweigh the advice from 2008 and would be given significant weight in the assessment of the scheme. Given the planning history, the previous officer advice

and the views of the Planning Inspector, it was agreed, with the support of the Local Member, Councillor Fraser, that the application should be referred to the Planning Committee for determination. The recommendation of officers, with significant weight being given to the planning Inspectors previous decision, is that the application be refused on the grounds of the harmful impact of the large rear element of the dwelling on visual amenity and the character of the surrounding countryside.

Planning History

2. **S/0978/05/F** – Planning permission refused for a scheme of substantial extension of the existing dwelling on the grounds of its impact on the countryside.
3. **S/2130/08/F** – Planning permission refused for the erection of a replacement dwelling and change of use of agricultural land to garden land on ground of scale, bulk and increased impact on the countryside.
4. **S/0294/10/F** – Planning permission refused for the erection of a replacement dwelling and change of use of agricultural land to garden land. The dwelling was reduced in scale somewhat from the 2008 application, but was still considered harmful due to its bulk, scale and increased impact on the countryside.
5. **S/2145/10** – Planning permission refused for a further revised design of the replacement dwelling and change of use of agricultural land to garden land. The dwelling was redesigned to have hipped roofs and its bulk reduced somewhat, however it was still considered unacceptable due to its detrimental impact on the countryside. An appeal against this refusal was allowed by a Planning Inspector in February 2012 subject to conditions including a requirement for a landscaping scheme and the removal of permitted development rights for further extensions and outbuildings.

Planning Policies

6. *National Planning Policy Framework*
7. *Local Development Framework - Local Development Framework Core Strategy*
ST/6 Infill Villages
8. *Local Development Framework Development Control Policies*
DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments
DP/5 Cumulative Development
DP/7 Development Frameworks
HG/1 Housing Density
HG/6 Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
HG/7 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
NE/15 Noise Pollution
SF/10 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments
SF/11 Open Space Standards
TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards
9. *Draft Local Plan Policies*
HQ/1 Design Principles
H/7 Housing Density

H/12 Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
H/13 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
SC/6 Indoor Community Facilities
SC/7 Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments

Consultations

10. **Castle Camps Parish Council** has recommended approval of the proposed development.
11. **Local Highways Authority** has requested conditions in respect of any new gates and driveway, but has not objected to the proposed development.
12. **South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC)** Environmental Health Officer has no objection to the proposed development but requests conditions relating to construction hours and practices.
13. **SCDC Landscapes Officer** states that the existing dwelling occupies an elevated, exposed position near the north west edge of Camps End and that the northern side elevation, which is prominent when approaching the village, would extend to approximately 16m. He notes this would result in increased visual and landscape impacts at the edge of the village. His view is that this increased in scale would require mitigation through significant tree and hedgerow planting.

Representations

14. No representations have been received from the owner/occupiers of neighbouring properties in response to consultation on the proposed development, however the application submission contained copies of letters from the owner/occupiers of six neighbouring properties in Camps End which are supportive of the proposed development.

Planning Comments

15. The application site is in the hamlet of Camps End, which is some 2km from the main village of Castle Camps and is outside the village framework in the countryside. Highbanks House is a detached, two storey, hipped roof dwelling which was originally a pair of semi-detached dwellings which have since been converted into a single property. It is situated in an elevated position above the level of the road to the front and can be seen prominently on approach from the North East and in wider landscape views. There is a detached dwelling to the rear of the site, adjacent to the Northern side boundary, which is served by a driveway from the road to the front alongside the Northern gable end of the dwelling.
16. The proposed development is the erection of a replacement dwelling in the same location as the existing dwelling. Its frontage is of a similar design to the scheme approved by the planning inspectorate at appeal however it has a much larger rear two storey element which is 9.5 metres in total depth, compared to the originally approved rear element which was 2.5 metres in depth.
17. The Planning Inspectorate's decision to grant permission the replacement dwelling proposed in application S/2145/10 is considered to have established the principle of the replacement dwelling proposed by the current application. In addition, the impacts of the new dwelling on highway safety, parking provision and neighbour amenity would not be significantly greater in the new scheme when compared to the extant

permission. The principle point of difference to be considered is therefore the impact of the increased scale of the rear element on the visual amenity of the area and the landscape character of the wider countryside.

18. **Impact on Countryside and Visual Amenity** – The approved dwelling would have total depth back into the site of approximately 8.5 metres (approximately 6 metres of which is the main frontage element of the house with a 2.5 metre rear two storey element). The proposed scheme would retain the same 6 metre depth of the frontage element but would have a 9.5 metre deep rear element for a total depth of approximately 15.5 metres. The extensions would amount to a 45% increase in floor area over the approved replacement dwelling.
19. In allowing the previous scheme, the Planning Inspector had regard to the potential for extensions to be carried out to the approved dwelling under permitted development rights. He noted “the Council has suggested that a condition restricting permitted development rights should be imposed. Paragraph 87 of Circular 11/95, The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions, says that such conditions should not be used save in exceptional circumstances. Such conditions do exist in this instance in so far as the proposed dwelling would already be of the maximum size allowed by the development plan and any further extension would have a damaging impact on the surrounding countryside.”
20. Given the prominence of the site in views from lower land levels on approach from the North East, the impact of the proposed dwelling on the visual amenity of the area and the wider landscape would increase and the balance of the massing of the dwelling would be shifted from the front element to the rear.
21. While the view of the Council’s Landscapes Officer is that some of the impact could be mitigated by enhanced landscape planting on the boundaries of the site, the view taken by the Planning Inspector in removing permitted development rights from the approved scheme and his particular reason for doing so (the damaging impact that any further extension would have on the surrounding countryside) is given significant weight in the consideration of this application. The view of officers is that the projection of the rear element is excessive in terms of the balance of the two elements of the property and this is considered to weaken the design. In addition, notwithstanding possible planting of tree and hedgerow screening, it is considered that the overall depth of the extension would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area and the surrounding countryside as per the Planning Inspectors previous comments.
22. In 2008, the applicant was advised in writing by a Planning Officer that were a smaller replacement dwelling to be permitted and built, policy would allow for extensions to the dwelling of up to 50% of the approved house where they would be in scale and character with the existing dwelling and would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on the countryside. The applicant has stated that this led them to reduce the scheme to the size approved by the Planning Inspector with the intention that they would then extend the dwelling by up to 50%. Notwithstanding that the previous advice is considered to be in error as this is not how policies HG/6 and HG/7 are usually applied and the fact that the approved dwelling has not yet been built, the more recent view of the Planning Inspector that any further extension would have a damaging impact on the surrounding countryside and his consequent removal of permitted development rights is considered to have significantly more weight in the determination of the application than the advice from 2008. In addition, it is considered difficult to conclude that the 7 metre deep two storey addition to the approved rear element of the dwelling represents an extension which is in scale with

the dwelling and which would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings.

23. The applicant has referred to other dwellings in both Camps End and Castle Camps which are either replacement/new build dwellings or have had large extensions, however this is not considered to overcome either the weight of the Planning Inspectors previous views or the fact that the prominence and scale and design of the proposed scheme mean it is considered harmful to the visual amenity of the area and the wider countryside.
24. It is therefore considered that the proposed replacement dwelling is unacceptable in terms of its impact on the visual amenity and character of the countryside.
25. **Community Infrastructure** – The replacement of the existing dwelling with a new single dwelling is not considered to result in a material increase in the projected occupancy of the property and it is therefore considered that there would be no significant additional burden on local infrastructure. Contributions towards open space and community facilities are therefore not required.

Recommendation

26. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is recommended that the application be refused for the following reason(s):
 1. The proposed replacement dwelling, by virtue of the scale of the two storey rear element and its impact on the design of the dwelling, would have an unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area and would materially increase the impact of the site on its surrounding to the detriment of the openness and the character of the countryside. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies DP/2, DP/3 and HG/7 of the Local Development Framework 2007.

Background Papers

1. Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection:
 - (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
 - (b) on the Council's website; and
 - (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
2. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
 1. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD 2007
 2. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
 3. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents
 4. Proposed Submission South Cambridgeshire Local Plan July 2013
 5. National Planning Policy Framework 2012
 6. National Planning Policy Guidance

7. Planning File Reference: S/0978/05/F, S/2130/08/F, S/0294/10/F, S/2145/10,
S/2534/14/FL.

Report Author: Dan Smith – Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713162